

# **HARTFORD CONNECTICUT**

**THE NEW ENGLAND**

**FEDERAL LIVABLE COMMUNITIES TASK FORCE**

**LIVABLE COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE**

## **THE FEDERAL RESPONSE TO HARTFORD'S NEED**

**October 23, 2000**

**Hartford, Connecticut**  
**New England Federal Livable Communities Task Force**  
**Federal Response to Hartford's Need**

**Federal Activities:**

The Federal Livable Communities Initiative began with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Smart Growth at a Smart Growth Conference sponsored by the Environmental Protection Agency on February 2, 1999. This initial MOU was signed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and four U.S. Department of Transportation Modal Administrations: Federal Transit Administration, Federal Railroad Administration, Federal Highway Administration, and Federal Railroad Administration. This group provided the nucleus of the New England Federal Livable Communities Task Force. The Task Force then formed a Livable Communities Working group composed of Agency staff members and charged them to develop a Livable Communities program for the Task Force. The Working Group reviewed nine projects in New England that demonstrated a strong commitment to Smart Growth and Livable Communities. The Hartford region project, centered around their TCSP funded "Picture It Better Together: Taking Transportation Goals from Policy to Reality" project, was one of three projects selected for special attention by the Task force.

On February 16, 2000 the New England Federal Livable Community Task Force met with representatives of the three communities involved in the "Picture It Better Together" project and Representatives from the Adriaen's Landing project team. The meeting was hosted by the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG), the Connecticut Office of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the City of Hartford and Phoenix Insurance. The meeting was devoted to presentations from the Hartford region about their projects and their "vision" for the Hartford region through these projects and a discussion of the various federal livable communities initiatives with the Federal Livable Community Working Group. Members of the Federal Working Group presented an overview of their programs as they relate to "Livable Communities" and how they relate or could relate to the two programs that were included in Hartford's presentations. Presentations from the Working Group included EPA, FTA, HUD, GSA, FAA, SBA, NHTSA, FHWA, DOE and USDA.

As a result of this meeting, Picture It Better Together, through the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG), with the City of Hartford and the Parkville Revitalization Association, prepared a list of needs and areas where federal agencies could be of assistance to the Hartford region livability initiative. The Federal Agencies prepared a report summarizing the Federal programs and their relationship to what is going on in the Hartford region and included names and telephone numbers of contacts in each agency. The Federal Agencies also began working, individually, with the Picture It Better Together representatives to assure that there was maximum involvement of their individual programs as appropriate to livable communities initiatives.

The Federal Livable Community Working Group next met with the project representatives on September 7, 2000. The purpose of this meeting was to evaluate the effectiveness of federal involvement to date and to assess any needs that still need to be addressed. This report summarizes the federal activities to date and the federal response to issues raised at the September 7, 2000 meeting.

A final event is scheduled for October 23, 2000 for the Federal Livability Task Force members. The group will tour the communities that are the focus of the TCSP program and the Livable Communities initiative, present this report, and sign an updated Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU has been updated to specifically include the three projects selected by the Task Force and to expand the number of federal agencies participating in the Task Force. The Signatory Agencies now include twelve Federal Agencies: The Environmental Protection Agency, the General Services Administration, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Interior, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Energy, the Department of Agriculture and five Department of Transportation Modal Administrations, Federal Aviation Administration, Federal Highway Administration, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Federal Railroad Administration and Federal Transit Administration.

### **Background:**

The purpose of the Hartford Transportation and Community System Preservation Program (TCSP) grant "Picture It Better Together: Taking Transportation Goals from Policy to Reality" is to address the interconnectedness of regional transportation projects and local land use decisions. A number of transportation and development issues are presently converging on Hartford region making this project particularly timely. These include the Hartford New Britain Busway, a Downtown Circulator Study, the Development of a Regional Transit Strategy, and a study of the corridor north of Hartford leading to an expanding Bradley International Airport. In addition, the Proposed Development of the Adriaen's Landing in Downtown Hartford presents pressures on local infrastructure. Picture it Better Together represents an opportunity for local neighborhood groups and City and Regional officials to assure that these projects become a catalyst for joint development and redevelopment of the urban core while creating neighborhoods that support transit and walking trips and make their communities a more livable place. The project includes the Parkville neighborhood in Hartford and the communities of West Hartford and Suffield.

This Federal Livable Communities Task Force project has grown out of the TCSP Project, awarded to the City of Hartford and the Capitol Region Council of Governments in July of 1999.

### **Local Partners:**

The Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG), the City of Hartford, and the Parkville Revitalization Association (a neighborhood within Hartford) and the towns of West Hartford and Suffield.

Federal participation in Hartford livable community related programs is summarized in the following section.

## **US DOT:**

### **Agency Involvement:**

TCSP discretionary program, 480,000	FHWA funded	\$
Hartford West Major Investment Study	FHWA funded	1,710,000
Hartford Bus Rapid Transit EIS	FHWA funded through FTA	1,520,000
Hartford Bus Rapid Transit Demonstration	FTA	50,000
Hartford Bus Rapid Transit Prelim. Engineering	FTA funded	
Griffin Corridor Study	FTA funded	993,000
Downtown Circulation Study	FTA funded	600,000
CRCOG Transit Strategy	FTA funded	640,000
Bradley International Airport		

### **Agency Response / Activities:**

#### **FTA Response:**

New Britain/Hartford Busway - permit process, New Starts Funding, etc. (Identified Sept. 7)

The FTA is committed to expediting the successful implementation of the New Britain/Hartford Busway. The Busway has been recognized as part of FTA's Bus Rapid Transit initiative and is receiving attention on several fronts. FTA region I is focusing attention on expediting the Environmental Process and moving the project through the New Starts rating process. A meeting is scheduled for November 2, 2000 in Hartford to review the interconnectedness of the various transit initiatives in Hartford, and their relationship to each other, the CRCOG Transit Strategies, Regional Land Use (part of the FTA New Starts Criteria) and livable communities.

FTA Section 5309 funding applications - Downtown Circulator, CRCOG RTA, and Griffin Corridor. (Identified Sept. 7)

Funding for these projects has been approved and work is in progress. CRCOG has demonstrated an emphasis on meeting the region's mobility needs through transit and accomplishing roadway projects in a community sensitive manner. The FTA is committed to supporting this effort as well as assuring that FTA and FHWA projects are coordinated to maximize the Livable Communities Agenda.

Most recently, CRCOG was one of four applicants nationwide to be selected to receive a special FTA Environmental Justice Challenge Grant. This grant will enable CRCOG to place special emphasis on making sure that the needs of the traditionally underserved, low income and minority populations are considered as transportation projects are developed for the region. In addition, this effort will strive to assure that these neighborhoods will not experience adverse physical or environmental impacts from transportation investments.

FTA/FHWA - provided assistance of the Volpe Center for evaluation of TCSP program in Hartford.

## **FHWA Response:**

### Westside Access Study - implementation funds

As part of the Hartford West MIS recommendations, Westside Access improvements were proposed. The proposal included a full interchange at Flatbush Ave. and elimination of the existing left hand exit. Reconstruction of Prospect Ave. interchange to a standard diamond interchange. Also reconstruction of Sisson & Sigourney interchanges to improve access to adjacent communities.

The study is ongoing and Wilber Smith Associates is the consultant. It is expected once the study is complete, the consultant will recommend a list of projects to ConnDOT for implementation. A citizen advisory committee is being used to guide the consultant. Richard Linnemann (594-2144) and James Morrin (594-2147) are the ConnDOT project managers.

### Rentschler Field access – implementation funds

Rentschler Field is a 600-acre prime development site located just two miles from downtown Hartford. CRCOG identified redevelopment of this former private airport as a regional priority because of the potential regional economic benefits, and because this type of infill development supports regional goals to reduce sprawl and promote smart growth.

At the request of the Town of East Hartford, CRCOG conducted a study to identify what access improvements are needed to support full redevelopment of the site. CRCOG's recommended access improvements were not incorporated into the construction plans for the new state-funded 40,000-seat stadium for UCONN football. State officials felt that the stadium *by itself*, did not require the type of access improvements recommended by CRCOG. However, the stadium covers only 75 acres of the 600-acre site. CRCOG will continue to pursue funding to implement access improvements that will support full development of 600-acre site.

### NHTSA/FHWA - traffic calming workshops

The Technology Transfer Center at the Connecticut Transportation Institute frequently hosts Workshops/Training Sessions for Connecticut's local government personnel on a wide variety of topics related to planning, design and operation of the local transportation system. Workshops on Traffic Calming are frequently held. To receive more information on the services available from the Transportation Institute's Technology Transfer Center, phone (860) 486-5400 or fax (860) 486-2399.

### FHWA TCSP – implementation funds for livable roadways

It seems a bit early to look for implementation funds at this time, while the study is ongoing. However, the region develops project concepts for the STP urban program based on eligibility and cost effectiveness. These applications are submitted to ConnDOT's Field Coordinator who processes the application to the Project Concept Unit in the Bureau of Engineering and Highway Operations for review. Projects under the urban program are normally sponsored by the local municipality who is responsible for financing 100% of the design cost if the project involves a local road. After completion of design, the municipality's responsibility is limited to contributing 10% of the right-of-way costs. The construction phase is funded with 20% state and 80% federal dollars.

**NHTSA Response:**

Status of assistance from FHWA/NHTSA:

**NHTSA/FHWA - Traffic Calming Workshops**

Traffic Calming Presentation Developed - Contact Matthew Keamy at FHWA MA Division (617) 494-3610 to schedule presentation.

Information provided on Pedestrian Safety train-the-trainer course and Roadshow in Waterbury, CT, September 18-20, 2000. Advised Bonnie Dubose of the FHWA CT Division of Hartford's interest. For further information call Bonnie at (860) 659-6703 ext. 3002

Intersection Safety Workshop - Sturbridge, MA, September 21, 2000. Contact - Jane Bates at (617) 494-3427.

Stop Red Light Running Workshop - Portland, ME, September 22, 2000. Contact - Jane Bates.

Traffic Calming information may be obtained through the Institute of Traffic Engineers Website [www.ite.org](http://www.ite.org)

**NHTSA - Safe Communities Brochures**

Latest safe communities brochures provided to group at Sept 7, 2000 meeting.

Provided several publications to the Parkville Neighborhood including (1) walkability checklists - Spanish, (2) safety tips - English, Portuguese, Spanish, Vietnamese (3) Walking through the Years - Spanish, (4) Nighttime visibility cards, (5) NHTSA Pedestrian Safety Toolkit (6) Pedestrian Safety Tips

NHTSA staff is available to conduct a Safe Communities briefing, for further information contact Jane Bates.

Pedestrian/Bicycle Websites distributed to the group at the Sept. 7, 2000 meeting.

NHTSA – Safe Communities Brochures  
SAFE COMMUNITIES SERVICE CENTER  
c/o National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
819 Taylor St., Rm 8A38  
Fort Worth, TX 76102  
Phone: 817-978-3653 · Fax: 817-978-8339  
Email: [Safe.Communities@nhtsa.dot.gov](mailto:Safe.Communities@nhtsa.dot.gov)  
Or visit our Web site at:  
<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/safecommunities>

**FAA Response:**

Technical Assistance to regional planning agencies regarding airport access and compatible land use planning. FAA will respond as requested by local agencies.

**Contacts:**

Federal Transit Administration (FTA)  
Region I  
55 Broadway, Suite 920  
Cambridge, MA 02142-1093  
Andrew Motter          617-494-3560

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)  
Region I  
55 Broadway, Room 931, (Code 903)  
Cambridge, MA 02142  
616-493-3427 Jane Bates

FHWA Connecticut Division Office  
628-2 Hebron Avenue, Suite 303  
Glastonbury, CT 06033-5007  
860-659-6703 Amy Jackson Grove extension 3010  
Don West extension 3009

FHWA Massachusetts Division Office  
55 Broadway 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Cambridge, MA 02142  
Wesley Blount          617-494-2528  
Ed Silva                617-494-2253  
Matt Keamy            617-494-3610 (Traffic Calming)

FAA  
Ralph Nicosia-Rusin, Airport Capacity Program Manager, 781/238-7612  
Gail Lattrell, Airport Planner 781/238-7615  
New England Region Airports Division  
Federal Aviation Administration  
12 New England Executive Park  
Burlington, MA 01803

## **US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):**

### **Present Involvement:**

EPA assessment and cleanup of Brownfields sites.

• Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot (1997)	\$200,000
• Targeted Brownfields Assessment at Hartford Car Wash (Funds spent by EPA to perform TBA (1997)	\$23,600
• Additional Funds added to Demonstration Pilot as Hartford Was a Showcase Community Finalist (1998)	\$200,000
• Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund Pilot (1999)	\$500,000
• Supplemental Assessment Demonstration Pilot Funds (2000)	\$150,000

Brownfields total to Hartford	\$1,073,600
-------------------------------	-------------

EPA will continue to work with the Connecticut River Watershed Council on the Conn./MA growth forum to be held spring 2001.

EPA participation on the New Britain Busway EIS Advisory Committee.

Urban Environmental Initiative

\* EPA has assigned Ms. Stacey Johnson to Hartford as the “City Manager”. Ms Johnson has worked in partnership with Hartford (public and private) organizations on a variety of projects including: training community educators on lead poisoning prevention and indoor air quality; identification of major air polluters that contribute to high levels of ozone and other toxins in the airshed; and development of a vacant lots program which transfers select lots to local residents and clean up of three community vacant lots.

### **Agency Response / Activities:**

General:

#### **1. Better America Bonds**

*Status:* Establishment of Better America Bonds requires Congressional action, and as of mid-September, 2000, Congress had not passed the required legislation. According to staff in EPA HQ, there still is a chance that one or more Congressional sponsors (e.g., Senators Hatch or Chafee) will attach language authorizing Better America Bonds to one of the omnibus funding bills that Congress needs to pass in order to fund federal agencies for FY2001. If the legislation does pass, this new financing tool would generate \$9.5 billion in zero-interest bonding authority over five years for investments by local, state, and tribal governments. The bonds can be used to preserve and enhance green space, protect water quality, or clean up brownfields.

Rural and Environmental Conservation

#### **2. EPA Livable Community Grants**

*Status:* EPA New England hopes to run another round of Livable Communities Grants this coming fiscal year, but we won't know if we've got the necessary funding until February/March 2001. We would be happy to put any interested organization on our mailing list to receive information about the grant program if we run it. (To get on this list, send names & street mailing addresses to Rosemary Monahan, [monahan.rosemary@epa.gov](mailto:monahan.rosemary@epa.gov) or 617-918-1087.) This past year, we had only \$150,000 available for all of New England, but are pleased that one of only 6 projects we funded was the Park River Community Watershed Initiative.

### **3. EPA Smart Growth slide show and educational program**

*Status:* EPA New England has developed a slide show and educational program on smart growth that is designed for community organizations and local officials. This educational program increases awareness and understanding of the many facets of smart growth. The presentation describes what sprawl and urban abandonment is doing to our environment and to our cities and towns, and presents solutions that communities can consider. To schedule a presentation call Alison Walsh at 617-918-1593 or email her at [walsh.alison@epa.gov](mailto:walsh.alison@epa.gov).

### **4. Brownfields**

**Showcase Community:** The announcements on the Showcase Community winners will be made on Wednesday, October 11 in Atlantic City at Brownfields 2000.

**Supplemental Assessment Pilot Funds:** Hartford received supplemental funds in June 2000. In the application, Hartford identified four specific sites: Locust Street (Site C); SAND Park (Site R); 393 Homestead Avenue (Site U); and 17-35 Bartholomew Avenue (Site V). If Hartford wishes to change any of these sites to cover different priorities, they may certainly do so. However, see below.

**Pope Park West:** The regional office received additional Targeted Brownfields Assessment (TBA) funds at the end of our fiscal year. (A Targeted Brownfields Assessment is one where EPA will task our in-house Superfund contractors to perform a Phase II for a municipality.) Although the TBA program is a competitive one, we accept applications on a rolling basis. The application is two pages long and is available on the Region I home page. For additional information, call Jim Byrne of the Brownfields Team at (617) 918-1389.

### **5. EPA Participation with Connecticut River Watershed Council (CRWC)**

CRCOG's project dovetails well with the Connecticut River Watershed Council's (CRWC) project to develop a "Rural Conservation and Development Strategy". Its goal is to help preserve and create livable communities throughout the Capitol Region.

The staffs of CRWC and CRCOG will be working with community leaders and the public to define a vision for the valley and to develop strategies, plans and programs town-by-town and for the Capitol Region as a whole.

While differing in geographic scope, both programs seek to foster better communication and integration of effort among the people, communities, nonprofits, business and industry and government agencies concerned with issues related to advancing environmental health and economic prosperity in the Capitol Region and in the valley to Springfield and environs.

**Contacts:**

Federal Livable Communities Project -	Carl Dierker	617-918-1091
	Anne Fenn	617-918-1805
Permits/New Britain/Hartford Busway	Tim Timmerman	617-918-1025
Urban Environment Initiative -	Stacey Johnson	617-918-1526
Regional Growth Forums -	Harley Laing	617-918-1217
Hartford Brownfields Project	Jeanne Webb	860-522-4888
Connecticut American Heritage River Project	Dan Burke	617-918-1285
Livable Community Training and Community Education	Alison Walsh	617-918-1593

## **US Department of Energy (DOE):**

### **Present Involvement:**

US DOE-Boston Regional Office has been working with the Hartford-based Capitol Clean Cities Coalition since 1997 to sponsor alternative fuel vehicle projects in the City of Hartford. Success of the program is evident throughout the city with the visibility of the 42 clean burning natural gas powered taxicabs operated by Yellow Cab and ACE cab. The Capitol Clean Cities Coalition received \$50,000 in FY 1997, \$125,000 in FY 1998, \$12,500 in FY 1999, and \$100,000 in FY 2000 from the US DOE for various alternative fuel vehicle projects.

### **Agency Response / Activities:**

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Boston Regional Office, with local assistance from the Capitol Clean Cities of Connecticut Coalition, will facilitate the deployment of alternative fuel vehicles (AFVs) as part of the “Hartford, Picture It Better Together” project. DOE’s Clean Cities Program is a voluntary, locally based public-private partnership to deploy clean burning AFVs and build associated refueling infrastructure. The proposed Hartford/New Britain Busway project, the Downtown Circulation project, and other transit projects will help lay a foundation for future opportunities to deploy AFVs that can both satisfy a transportation need and provide significant environmental benefits by reducing harmful emissions.

Specifically, DOE and the Capitol Clean Cities of Connecticut Coalition will assist the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) with the following:

1. Vehicle Availability – DOE and the Capitol Clean Cities of Connecticut will provide CRCOG with information on all the available AFV technology options applicable to specific projects.
2. Infrastructure Development – DOE and the Capitol Clean Cities of Connecticut Coalition will work with local fuel providers and refueling infrastructure developers to build AFV fueling facilities.
3. Funding – DOE and the Capitol Clean Cities of Connecticut Coalition will help CRCOG identify various funding opportunities available to support AFV projects.
4. Outreach/Public Education – DOE and the Capitol Clean Cities of Connecticut Coalition will assist with outreach efforts to educate the public on the benefits of AFV use.

Brownfields to Brightfields - Rebuild America Program - Million Solar Roofs

### **Contacts:**

DOE Livable Communities	Scott Hutchins	617-565-9765
-------------------------	----------------	--------------

Clean Cities/Alternative Fuels	Mike Scarpino	617-565-9716
--------------------------------	---------------	--------------

## **US General Services Administration (GSA):**

### **Present Involvement:**

Federal Buildings in Hartford:

Ribicoff Building at 450 Main St.- adjacent to the Adriaens Landing project

The Cotter Building at 135 High St - adjacent to a proposed bus station on the Hartford West Busway

### **Agency Response / Activities:**

Involvement of the GSA Center of Expertise for Urban Development and Livability.

As both the Hartford West Busway and Adriaens Landing Projects progress, potential for participation of the GSA Center of Expertise for Urban Development and Livability may be realized. The Ribicoff Building is bordered by Prospect Street to the rear. Although not a direct abutter to the Adriaens Landing project, The Ribicoff Building is close enough that there is a potential connection to any additional development spurred by the Adriaens Landing Project in the vicinity of Prospect Street.

The Train station in the Parkville neighborhood will be involved as a potential Station/Stop on the Hartford/New Britain Busway project. The Cotter Building is within a block of the Station/Busway. Depending on possible changes in traffic patterns, the Cotter Building could transition to the new Busway Station.

As these projects develop, GSA representatives will be available to work with project proponents to facilitate incorporation of the "federal" public places into the fabric of the development.

### **Contacts:**

James Devir  
Tip O'Neill FB  
10 Causeway St  
Boston, Ma 02222  
Tel# 617 565 7902

Marjorie Samra  
Tip O'Neill FB  
10 Causeway St.  
Boston, Ma 02222  
Tel# 617 565 7474

Edward Giefer  
GSA Building  
18<sup>th</sup> and F Streets, NW  
Washington, DC  
Tel# 202 501 0589

## **US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD):**

### **Present Involvement:**

#### **Funded Projects:**

##### **Multifamily Housing**

HUD provides mortgage insurance and/or subsidy to 5684 units of housing in 59 developments in Hartford which are owned by nonprofit organizations and private developers.

A firm commitment in the amount of \$10,400,300 was issued recently for construction of a 105-bed nursing home.

Construction is underway on a 18-unit \$2,005,400 project to meet the needs of individuals living with AIDS.

We are working to target more of our lending to under served areas. Marketing of the 220 program will assist in mixed-use development for targeted redevelopment areas.

##### **Single Family Housing**

In 1999, HUD's FHA programs insured 13,153 loans in the amount of \$1,329,005,416 for the purchase and rehabilitation of one to four family homes in the State of Connecticut. A breakout of the projects in Hartford is not available at this time.

The Connecticut Housing Finance Agency (\$81,426) and the Urban League of Greater Hartford Area receive HUD funding for housing counseling.

##### **Public Housing**

Operating subsidies for federal public housing - \$8,486,240

Modernization funds for existing public housing - \$6,526,220

Public Housing Drug Elimination - \$497,505

Resident Opportunity and Self- Sufficiency Program

Gun Buy Back

HOPE VI Demolition Grant for Stowe Village Apartments

##### **Fair Housing**

Regional Opportunity Counseling Program - HERC \$1.2 million

Fair Housing Association of Connecticut - Fair Housing Initiatives

\$300,000

##### **Community Planning & Development**

Community Development Block Grant - \$4,905,000

HOME for creation of affordable housing - \$2,248,000

Emergency Shelter Grant for homeless individuals and families - \$174,000

Homeless Continuum of Care - \$1,135,000

Housing Opportunities for People Living with AIDs (HOPWA) - \$1,413,000

Brownfields Economic Development Initiative - Adriaen's Landing -  
\$2 million Grant, \$13 million loan

Special Economic Development Initiatives - Bushnell, Mark Twain House

Economic Development Initiative - Learning Corridor

Youthbuild - Co-opportunity \$650,000

Technical Assistance - Community Housing Development Organizations, HOME,

McKinney Act Homeless Assistance Programs, HOPWA

Community Outreach Partnership Center - Trinity \$300,000

SHOP -Self Help Ownership Opportunity Program infrastructure grant to Habitat for Humanity

Lead Abatement Program - a grant to the State of Connecticut includes Hartford as a target community

**Agency Response / Activities:**

HUD looks forward to coordinating with DOT and CRCOG and responding to requests from project participants.

The Adriaen's Landing project will benefit from a \$2,000,000 Brownfields grant to the City of Hartford and \$13,000,000 in Section 108 Loan funds. A draft EIS is expected to be published shortly. This will be a very good opportunity for all concerned parties, Federal and others, to evaluate this high impact project in terms of Livable Communities.

Through relationships developed by our Community Planning and Development Division in administering HUD entitlement funds distributed annually to the City of Hartford, the City of West Hartford, and, if applicable, through the State of CT for Suffield, we have an opportunity to encourage these entities to consider "Livable Communities" concepts in their 5 year Consolidated Plans and Annual spending plans. We also have very limited discretionary funds available for technical assistance related to entitlement programs.

New projects of assisted housing are very limited.

Public Housing in the City of Hartford is going through a radical transformation involving demolition and deconcentration through the HOPE VI program and other methods. The rebuilding of Charter Oak Village which borders West Hartford is in process and involves reuse of some of its land for employment generating uses and a JOB Corps program. Perhaps the Livable Communities idea could add value to this project.

**Contacts:**

Peter Blomstrom, Community Builder  
One Corporate Center, 19<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Hartford, CT 06103  
(860) 240-4800 x 3006  
peter\_c.\_blomstrom@hud.gov

Martin J. Nee (617) 565-5192

## **US Department of Agriculture (USDA):**

### **Present Involvement:**

Designed and facilitated South Branch Park River Community Design Workshop, on May 20, 2000, with the University of Connecticut.

Participated in Earth Day Celebration at Hartford Technical Community College.

Resource Conservation and Development Program (RC&D) provides ongoing facilitation and coordination for technical activities on nature trails and community gardens at Annie Fisher School, University of Hartford, and South Branch Park River.

Technical and financial assistance to Suffield Agricultural Community on meeting their environmental obligations.

Technical assistance (engineering, soils information, landscape architecture design) has been provided for projects on the North and South Branches of the Park River. Includes trails, greenways, bridges to the University of Hartford, and playing fields.

Provided natural resources inventories for areas along North and South Branches of the Park River.

Provided facilitation to Parkville and Asylum Hill Neighborhood Revitalization Strategic Planning Retreats.

Provided technical assistance to the Connecticut River Watershed Council on their Livable Communities Grant (includes Greater Hartford area).

Engineering and inspection assistance planned to maintain flood control channels on South Branch of the Park River and Trout Brook in Hartford, West Hartford, and Newington. The project will cost \$2.1 million -- awaiting State Bond Commission approval.

Provided technical assistance to the City of Hartford Parks Department (soils information, wetlands mapping) as part of Keney Park Revitalization.

### **Agency Response / Activities:**

#### **Rural and Environmental Conservation**

Farmland Preservation -- The 1996 Farm Bill authorized federal monies to cost share on the Purchase of Development Rights with state and local entities. Connecticut NRCS, working with the state Department of Agriculture, received \$2 million of federal funds which leveraged over \$2 million in state funds to purchase development rights on ten farms. The total funds authorized in the 1996 Farm Bill have been spent, and congressional action is needed to make more federal funds available.

NRCS can provide technical assistance to towns on mapping and evaluating prime farmland soils, agricultural lands, and other natural resource areas, and developing evaluation criteria for purchase of open space and agricultural lands. In addition, NRCS can provide farmers and

landowners with technical and financial assistance to address their conservation needs for erosion control, animal waste management, irrigation efficiency, etc. This can improve their economic viability, transition to new products, and improve water quality and wildlife habitat. Long-term easements can be purchased on specific farmland adjacent to streams, wetlands, and on steep slopes through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and Wetland Reserve Program (WRP).

NRCS or EPA can also help locate experts to speak with communities on farmland and open space protection strategies such as Transfer of Development Rights, Conservation Easements, Estate Planning, etc.

### **Urban Revitalization**

NRCS soil scientists, landscape architects, community planners, engineers, biologists, and conservationists can continue to provide technical assistance. This might include:

- Visual imaging of parks, trails, gardens, stormwater structures
- Evaluations of soil suitability for a tree planting program
- Evaluations of soil suitability for community gardens, parks, and trails
- Inventory and assessment of natural resources and soil site suitability for uses of Pope Park West and brownfields sites.
- Engineering assistance to restore wetlands and floodplain areas and address stormwater management
- Design of planted vegetated buffers to improve water quality, air quality, and provide noise abatement
- Facilitation of community group activities related to natural resource issues
- Training of volunteers to do streamwalks and other natural resource inventories
- Design of visionary and interactive planning workshops

NRCS in Connecticut will continue to provide technical staff to support community-based livability initiatives in Connecticut. USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service contacts listed below are available to CRCOG and the Watershed Council for continued support of projects in the Region.

### **Contacts:**

Kip Kolesinskas (agency contact)  
USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service  
16 Professional Park Road  
Storrs, CT 06268  
(860) 487-4047 (phone)  
(860) 487-4054 (fax)  
**Kip.Kolesinskas@CT.usda.gov**

Vivian Felten (local community liaison)  
USDA, Natural Resources Conserv. Serv.  
627 River Street  
Windsor, CT 06095  
(860) 688-7725  
  
Vivian.Felten@CT.usda.gov